

Fall

By Kathryn Tatnall -Youth Services Librarian

Fall is just around the corner. On Tuesday, September 22, the autumnal equinox occurs. The word “equinox” comes from the Latin words “aequus” meaning “equal” and “nox” which means “night”. So “equal night”, simply put, is the time when daylight hours are roughly the same length as night time. After the autumnal equinox the daylight hours become shorter and the night time hours lengthen. This all ends with the winter solstice when daylight hours lengthen and night time hours shorten.

Most of us don't mark the passing of the season with such a scientific explanation. We like the leaves changing color, the cooler temperatures or “sweater weather”, and the seasonal food and celebrations that surround it. I love a good apple cider, a warm sweater, and the crunch of leaves under foot while the scent of snow teases each morning. I also love curling up on the couch with a great book to share. Here are a few of my favorite fall themed books to read aloud with children.

Leaf Man and *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf* by Lois Ehlert are the first books I reach for when planning a fall-themed story time. Ehlert's die-cut and found object collage illustrations are so eye-catching that my first read through is really just a look-through. I am struck every time by her creativity. In the midst of the beauty and whimsy found in her books Ehlert manages to sneak in some education, too.

If you haven't yet read any of Lauren Thompson's “*Mouse's First...*” books, now is the time. Mouse is an adorable little character that the reader has the pleasure of watching experience the world in each book. In *Mouse's First Fall*, Minka shows Mouse why fall leaves are so much fun.

In *The Busy Little Squirrel* by Nancy Tafuri, the reader discovers fall from the perspective of a little squirrel that is so busy trying to get ready for winter that he has to turn down all his friends' invitations. Tafuri's beautiful artwork and repetitive text draws the reader through the book to find out why squirrel is so busy he has no time to play.

There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Leaves by Lucille Colandro is a great pick for those who want a good giggle. Colandro had taken the rhyming cadence of the song, “There was an old lady who swallowed a fly,” and turned it into something sillier. There are several versions of the song by this author, but in this one an old lady swallows some leaves, a shirt, a pumpkin, and a rake to start. What will happen? You won't know unless you read the book!

Finally, *Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn* by Kenard Pak is a beautiful illustrated story that shows the glorious beginnings of fall as shiny summer fades. As a young girl walks through her town she says goodbye to all the signs of summer and hello to all the signs of fall.

These are just some of the picture books about autumn that are available in the Children's Room of the New Ulm Public Library. Stop by to pick up a few for those cozy cuddles on the couch.